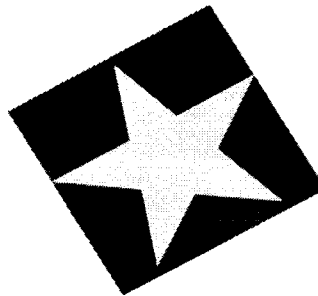


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PALMETTO STARS
PROGAM ASSESSMENT RELIABILITY



PALMETTO STARS®

Quality Early Care and Education
for South Carolina Children

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STATE DOCUMENTS

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February 1, 2005

INTRODUCTION

Background: South Carolina was the first state in the nation to use a quality rating system tied to a tiered reimbursement strategy to improve the quality of child care in 1992. The state's federally funded child care subsidy program provides for affordable and available child care for eligible families who are working, in school, or in training and promotes quality child care for all children. Federal requirements mandate that parents are provided choice in where to place their children in care.

The current quality rating system for child care has three defined levels of care: Level 1 (meets state child care regulatory requirements); Level 2 (meets voluntary quality standards one step above regulatory requirements); and Level 3 (meets national accreditation standards approved by the state). Currently, 1,138 child care centers statewide now participate in this system (DSS Child Care Voucher System Enhanced/Unenhanced Provider Report). With the advent of the South Carolina Office of First Steps to School Readiness and increasing public attention to early literacy and school readiness, the current three level system does not adequately differentiate child care programs to meet the state's growing need for program accountability and children's readiness needs as well as consumer awareness needs.

Purpose: The South Carolina Department of Social Services (SCDSS) has the statutory authority for child care licensing and since 2004 has administered the federal child care subsidy program. Palmetto STARS, the proposed 5 star voluntary rating system, is designed to be an interagency initiative between SCDSS and the South Carolina State Department of Education (SDE) to rate all types of child care and early education facilities based on the quality of their staff and program. (See Appendix A for

a brief overview of the proposed Palmetto STARS system and Appendix B for a brief overview of the long-range recommendations that guided the development of Palmetto STARS.) According to the National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC), 35 other states have quality rating systems for child care, but to our knowledge none have interagency initiatives in partnership with public education.

Rating results for the proposed system will be posted in centers and schools and made available to the public to define child care quality. SCDSS licensing staff will continue their licensure functions at Level 1 and national accreditation from an entity approved by Palmetto STARS will be accepted at Level 5. Staff from SCDSS and SDE will rate programs at the middle voluntary levels – SCDSS staff will rate centers for Levels 2 and 3 and SDE and SCDSS staff will both rate centers/schools for Level 4. In this “high-stakes” environment, it is critical to the success of this statewide rating system that the assessors be reliable and consistent at all levels of quality.

Current Process: The South Carolina ABC Child Care Program Child Care Center Standards (ABC Program Standards) were developed in 1992 for Level 2 in the current quality rating system and most recently were revised in 2004 to define quality criteria that exceeded child care licensing requirements. These standards are used as the SCDSS assessment tool to determine child care center compliance and reimbursement level for the child care subsidy program. Two separate offices (one in Columbia serving 28 counties and one in Greenville serving 18 counties) conduct program reviews of child care providers using the ABC Program Standards. A total of 12 staff members statewide are currently employed for this function with an additional 2 vacancies.

Following orientation, newly hired staff are currently trained by accompanying an experienced program reviewer to site visits to use the assessment tool side by side. This one-on-one training continues until the experienced reviewer is comfortable with the scoring by the new person. Once the new person begins assessments, the new reviewer is encouraged to call into the office if s(he) has questions while in the field. Senior review staff continue to mentor the new employee and staff informally consult with each other about scoring issues and concerns. A supervisor reviews each staff person's program assessments.

Problem Statement: There is no formal inter-rater reliability process in the current SCDSS three level system. With the proposed expansion to additional quality levels and use of an inter-agency review team, a formal inter-rater reliability process is needed to assure statewide consistency.

A New Quality Child Care Rating System: An interagency team representing SCDSS licensing, SCDSS subsidy program (ABC Program), Head Start, and SDE worked with consultants from Clemson University and Columbia University to develop a matrix for the 5 quality levels to define the rating criteria at each quality level for programs serving children ages birth to 12 years old. The team reviewed work from other states with rating systems as well as existing in-state requirements and standards. The completed matrix for South Carolina will define criteria for pre-qualification standards, minimum program observation scores, required staff-child ratios, parent/guardian involvement, administration policies, records, and staff qualifications and development. The interagency team reviewed existing SCDSS licensing standards, ABC Program Standards, Head Start Performance Standards, SDE 4-year-old kindergarten

standards, and national accreditation standards currently approved by the State and used those standards to define the framework and parameters for the matrix development. The system will create a step-by-step progression of quality from basic health and safety (SCDSS licensing standards) to the highest quality designation (national accreditation). The minimum criteria of the matrix were reviewed by three statewide groups which have child care provider membership including: South Carolina Task Force on Quality of Early Care and Education, South Carolina Child Care Coordinating Council, and South Carolina Good Start Grow Smart Work Group. Comments and concerns have been received and are under consideration prior to the formal field test of the process anticipated for late spring of 2005.

METHODOLOGY

Assessment Tools for Quality Child Care: Historically in South Carolina and nationally, the quality of service to very young children has been measured by assessment of program quality rather than assessment of children. SDE is required by the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee to use the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R), a research-based assessment tool to evaluate the public school four- year- old kindergarten classrooms. This rigorous tool requires a minimum 3-hour observation period per classroom randomly chosen and focuses on overall quality of early childhood programs. It is reliable at the indicator and item level as well as total score with 86.1% agreement across the full scale and 71% agreement within one point at the item level. (Harms, Cryer, and Clifford, 1998, p.2).

Since 1992, SCDSS has used an in-house developed assessment tool (ABC Child Care Standards) modeled from the National Association for the Education of

Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation standards that requires a minimum of ½ hour observation per classroom per age group but assesses center-wide quality as well. Of 1,336 licensed centers, 967 centers were already being assessed against the DSS ABC Program Standards (DSS Child Care Voucher System Enhanced/Unenhanced Provider Report).

A number of states, including the neighboring states of North Carolina and Tennessee, use the Environment Rating Scales as the evaluation tool for their child care quality rating systems. After considering the very limited manpower in both South Carolina state agencies, the 967 providers already being assessed in the current SCDSS 3-level system, the manpower cost of administering the Environment Rating Scales, and the limited financial resources of SCDSS and SDE, the matrix team decided to utilize the Environment Rating Scales, which include the ECERS-R and companion scales Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale – Revised Edition (ITERS-R) and the School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS), for Level 4 providers to build on SDE current requirements; use the current ABC Child Care Standards for Level 2 providers; and adapt the ABC Child Care Standards for Level 3 providers. This cluster of assessment tools, as well as the application materials, will determine the quality rating score and star level assigned to a provider. Given the level of child care provider concern currently being expressed over changes to the established 13 year system, use of the existing tool for Level 2 will enable transition for most providers from one system to another to be as smooth as possible.

Creating a Process for Reliability of Assessors: In January 2004 none of the agency staff at either SDE or SCDSS had training on the Environment Rating Scales

(ERS), nor any formal experience with inter-rater reliability. SCDSS negotiated with the authors of those tools (ITERS-R, ECERS-R, and SACERS) to provide a series of five-day training sessions on each of the tools for a small group of identified state core assessors. The authors then initiated the inter-reliability process with the Palmetto STARS assessor team using the authors' methodology for reaching inter-rater reliability. A maximum of 4 people could be trained by each author for each tool at one week-long training session. Inter-agency teams were chosen for the ITERS-R and ECERS-R tools and only SCDSS staff members were chosen for the SACERS tool. The ECERS-R team was trained first (January 2004) with SDE staff serving as anchors (leaders) of the team. Seven out of eight trained staff reached reliability and the ECERS-R tool was used in a SDE field test with primary schools during the spring of 2004. The ITERS-R team was trained in July – August 2004 with all 8 trained staff reaching reliability (7 to become assessors and 1 to provide technical assistance to providers) with SCDSS staff identified as anchors of the team. Due to unexpected turnover at SDE and loss of 2 ECERS-R assessors, the planned team of 8 SACERS assessors to be trained was reconfigured to a team of 4 assessors and a second ECERS-R training for 5 staff was held (4 to become assessors and 1 to provide technical assistance to providers.) This restructuring was based on the volume of expected demand for the various tools (high demand expectations for the ECERS-R scale due to the SDE requirement of the tool for public schools providing 4-year-old kindergarten).

Identification of Obstacles to Success and Strategies for Improvement: Of the 8 original ECERS-R team members, the 2 SCDSS staff members were totally unfamiliar with the assessment tool and received a copy of the tool only two days prior to

the training. The initial training did not include review of the items individually prior to observation and the supplemental clarification guide was not made available. The assessor must rate across 470 indicators and across 7 subscales during an observation of one room or group at a time. SCDSS staff members reported the experience to be overwhelming and extremely stressful. It took more than 4 weeks following the five days of training with the test authors for the core group to reach reliability with each other, a major manpower expense.

One of the SC DSS employees was assigned to anchor the next round of training for the ITERS-R. She was asked to reflect on her personal experience from the ECERS-R training and to use her skills and extensive experience as a certified trainer of adults to restructure the next round to improve the training and reduce the related stress for new team members.

Based on her analysis of the initial training, the ITERS-R training was restructured in the following ways:

1. Rating scales to be used were distributed to team members several weeks in advance to enable team members to become familiar with scoring methodology and the nature of the scales.
2. A two day "orientation" session was held prior to the authors' training to familiarize team members with the scale items, discuss expectations as to length of training days, review visit protocol and logistics, discuss expected stress, distribute training schedule, and distribute needed tools for the reviews (tape measure, clipboard with storage capacity, probe, tote bag).
3. A new policy of three weeks maximum for inter-rater reliability visits for staff

participating in the ITERS-R training was introduced. After the identified three weeks, if a staff person were not reliable or close to reliability the person would not be eligible to be part of the core assessor team. This policy was instituted to send clear expectations to participating staff about commitment and cost of training.

A total of eight people were selected for the ITERS-R training – 1 SCDSS staff and 1 SDE staff who had participated in the ECERS-R training, 5 SCDSS staff new to the process, and 1 representative from a related non-profit agency who will provide technical assistance services. The ITERS-R Training Schedule was distributed to all participants in advance (Appendix C).

The two staff having experience with ECERS-R and one other SCDSS staff reached reliability by their 5th visit. Three SCDSS staff reached reliability by the 6th visit and the final SCDSS staff reached reliability by the 10th visit. The representative from the non-profit agency reached reliability by the 11th visit (within the maximum target of 12 visits). Average reliability scores after the first reliable score ranged from 86% to 95%, all of which exceeded the minimum inter-rater reliability requirements of 85% set for the process.

The successful strategies used for the ITERS-R training and reliability were repeated for the final round of training on the Environment Rating Scales. Five additional staff members were trained in the ECERS-R tool and four staff were trained in the SACERS tool. One SCDSS staff person was trained in all three tools to assure continuity and an overall knowledge base. One SDE staff member and 3 SCDSS staff members trained on two tools. Even with the lack of a clarification guidebook for the

SACERS tool which was available for the other two tools, the SCDSS staff person who had already trained on the two previous tools led the SACERS group of participants and all reached reliability within 6 visits following the training with the test author, with each participant being reliable with the test author at least one day. This accomplishment provided a savings of two additional man days per person over the ITERS-R inter-rater reliability, which had already provided a savings of four or more man days per person over the original ECERS-R inter-rater reliability round (Appendix D).

With multiple agency involvement in the Palmetto STARS rating system, a Code of Ethics was developed to assure that all staff members participating as a core assessor shared a common code of values for this statewide initiative (Appendix E). All participants completed the Code of Ethics form following completion of inter-rater reliability.

Adapting the Methodology for Level 2: Following the successful completion of training and inter-rater reliability attainment for the Environment Rating Scales to be used for Level 4 of the Palmetto STARS rating system in November of 2004, clarifications to the existing ABC assessment tool were made and the inter-rater reliability process was adapted for that tool. The structure of the ABC assessment tool simplified the process in that all answers are “yes” or “no” rather than a scale of choices from 1 to 7. An “All About Level 2” guide was prepared for clarification purposes (similar to the published All About The ECERS-R and All About The ITERS-R guidebooks) and incorporated into the assessment tool. All SCDSS program monitoring staff from both offices were trained together on Level 2 beginning January 18, 2005. Of the 15 staff members participating, ten had participated in one or more of the

Environment Rating Scales inter-rater reliability process and all had multiple years' experience with the ABC assessment tool. The Overview Day for January 18, 2005, utilized adult education techniques including an icebreaker and discussion of job description for assessors, review of "lessons learned" from ERS training and reliability, viewing of quality care video, review of assessment tool using a group activity, introduction of the Code of Ethics, a video observation scoring activity, and procedures for reliability visits (Appendix F). Following the overview day, the staff members were divided into pre-determined reliability teams of 3 or 4 members to observe in selected child care programs in the Columbia area and then debrief with each other. Each staff person was rotated around the groups to assure that each person conducted inter-rater reliability with all other staff from both offices. A one-page evaluation/comment form was developed to obtain feedback from those participating in the process as a means of improving the training process further (Appendix G).

RESULTS

Review of the rater-reliability charts (Appendix H) for the Level 2 assessment tool shows improvement of rater-reliability with familiarity with the reliability process and greater understanding of the group clarifications. Seventy-three percent of staff became reliable in the first week for the 3-5 year scale (2 staff reliable in 3 visits, 2 staff reliable in 4 visits, 7 staff reliable in 5 visits, and 4 not reliable after 5 visits). Those staff members not reaching reliability will conduct further visits in February 2005 to reach reliability. During the second week of training, 100% of staff became reliable for the 0-2 year scale (13 staff reliable in 3 visits and 2 staff reliable in 6 visits). One hundred percent of staff became reliable for the 6-12 year scale (12 staff reliable in 3 visits, 2 staff

reliable in 4 visits, and 1 staff reliable in 5 visits). Based on the scores reported to date, all staff members are expected to reach reliability in 3-4 additional visits.

Comments from the Evaluation/Comment Forms (Appendix G) provided feedback on areas that need improvement for future training sessions. A mix of activities had been planned including use of a video and a video observation activity that received mixed reviews. A number of staff responded that more time was needed on the clarifications for the standards and that they felt rushed with only one day of overview. Comments and discussions during the training indicate that there have been variations in interpretations between the two offices and among individual staff members. These issues highlight the need for the inter-rater reliability process. These issues will be reviewed and adjustments will be made to ensuing training sessions.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The assessment of quality in child care service requires assessment of caregiver interaction with children, program activities, health and safety practices, and the environment for children through direct observation. Program assessment reliability is a critical factor with program quality assessment tools based on reviewer observation and judgment. With a large number of reviewers, there is more opportunity for inconsistency in scoring of program quality. With a proposed new quality rating system that uses reviewers from two separate state agencies, the opportunities for inconsistency became a critical concern.

SCDSS and SDE adopted an assessment tool that met criteria of the SC Education Oversight Committee for the rating system and then adapted that inter-rater reliability process to the other tools for the new quality rating system. This year-long process has

required the SCDSS staff to develop a clarification guide for the existing tool, develop a training process for staff, and make changes to assessment policies and procedures. Rater-reliability was introduced to staff as they trained on the new tools (ECERS-R, ITERS-R, and SACERS) for a new level of quality. While staff found the process to be stressful, it appeared to be less threatening to do rater-reliability when everyone was using a new tool. Thus, the majority of staff had been introduced to the process prior to its adaptation for the currently used assessment tool (ABC Program Standards). All staff members had been using the ABC Program Standards for 2 – 13 years. The preliminary results indicate that the majority of staff members have been able to reach reliability within 5 visits. However, the new process has highlighted the variations between the two offices and among individual reviewers. The designation of 3 anchors (2 from the Columbia office and 1 from the Greenville office) to stay reliable together and the schedule for rater-reliability re-checks for all reviewers should address these issues. This documented process will strengthen the credibility and consistency of the new quality rating system and should be accomplished without major additional staff time and cost.

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APPENDIX A



SC Child Care and Early Education Quality Rating System

What is Palmetto STARS?

Palmetto STARS is a 5 star rating system for child care and early education facilities based on the quality of their staff and program. It is a voluntary system for licensed child care centers that choose to participate. The SC Department of Education expects four year-old kindergarten programs to participate.

Two new levels fill in the gaps in the state's previous DSS child care system which included three levels: DSS child care license (level 1), ABC-Enhanced (level 2), and national accreditation (level 3).

These two new levels have been added between ABC-Enhanced and national accreditation. These levels have been added because:

- Many child care providers have improved quality through millions of dollars in grants and intensive training and technical assistance from First Steps and the federally-funded ABC Child Care Program.
- Many child care providers have improved quality beyond the ABC-Enhanced standards but have been unable to achieve the highest standards – national accreditation.
- 940 of the state's 1,336 licensed centers (70%) already meet ABC-Enhanced standards.
- 36 states, including other southeastern states, have quality rating systems.

Palmetto STARS incorporates some of the recommendations of the SC Task on Quality Early Care and Education. The Task Force formed in February 2002 and is made up of 32 public and private South Carolina organizations.

Why is Palmetto STARS important?

Children will benefit. High quality child care programs will better prepare children for school, improving their opportunities for success in school and life.

Parents will be able to make more informed choices when program quality is clearly rated by the number of stars.

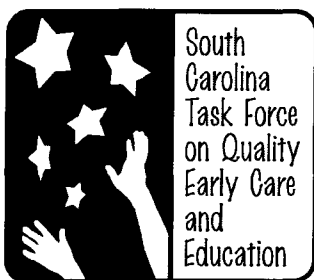
Child care providers who have been working hard to improve quality will be better recognized for the quality of service they provide. Child care providers will also have a clearer understanding of what they need to do to improve quality.

Palmetto STARS is the result of a three-year collaboration between the public and private sectors to develop a seamless system of quality child care and early education. This system helps to fulfill the *No Child Left Behind* mandate for early childhood.

APPENDIX A

What are the levels of quality?

- Level 1: * Child Care License
- Level 2: ** Upgrades to quality of staff and program
- Level 3: *** Substantial upgrades to quality of staff and program
- Level 4: **** High level of overall quality of staff and program
- Level 5: ***** Highest national standards of excellence



APPENDIX B

The South Carolina Task Force on Quality Early Care and Education was formed by the ABC child care program (now housed at DSS) in early 2002 as part of a national study. Thirty-two organizations representing South Carolina's child care and early education leaders provided expertise and input about improving care and education for children ages birth to 5 years.

Over a period of 18 months, the Task Force developed recommendations about how South Carolina could structure child care programs and 4-year-old kindergarten classes (called the "early care and education" system) so that children are better able to learn. The SC Department of Social Services, the SC Department of Education, and their partners reviewed all available research with the help of national experts, and identified the areas that help prepare children for school and improve their opportunities for success. The Task Force considered the costs and impact of different financing strategies and adjusted recommendations to lower costs while maintaining the quality of service.

The Task Force recommendations provide a vision for South Carolina's early care and education system to be achieved over a 15-year period. Recommendations include:

- How to help child care centers and 4-year-old kindergarten classrooms improve the quality of the care and education they provide.
- How much education and training caregivers should have, and how many children they should teach (staff:child ratios).
- How the child care and early education system should operate in order to be more effective.

Some of the recommendations are included in the new five star voluntary rating system, Palmetto STARS, at little or no cost to the state, providers, or parents. Other recommendations will require money and the agreement of state leaders. Twenty-eight South Carolina organizations now publicly support the Task Force recommendations.

The principles included in the recommendations have been used to guide the development and direction of Palmetto STARS, which simply expands the current child care rating system in South Carolina. The State is already working to improve its child care licensing system and regulations at the SC Department of Social Services (DSS), develop better data systems which will include the SC Department of Education and DSS, and expand support to parents and child care providers.

APPENDIX B

The Task Force has published a report: *A Bright Economic Future for Our Children and Our State begins with Palmetto STARS*. Both the full report and the executive summary can be found at www.dss.state.sc.us.

APPENDIX C
ITERS-R TRAINING SCHEDULE

July 19, 26 –30, 2004

July 19 – 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM. Tentative meeting place: Third floor conference room at the DSS Building. We may need more time than was originally planned. We will take a lunch break about 12 noon if it looks like we will need the additional time.

July 26 – Start time: 9:00 AM South Carolina ETV Telecommunications Center
Distance Learning Studio 5
1141 George Rogers Boulevard
Columbia, SC

Please arrive prior to the “start time” to be in the session room and ready to begin promptly at 9:00 AM as these sessions will be video taped. The Telecommunications Center is the large building on the left At the ETV Complex. It is the same building where the ECERS-R overview was done in January. Directions to the Telecommunications Center are attached.

Please be prepared to stay until approximately 7:00PM on this day.

July 27 – Tentative start time: 8:00AM
South Carolina ETV Telecommunications Center
Distance Learning Studio 5

Please be prepared to stay until approximately 6:00PM on this day.

July 29 – 4:00 – 6:00 PM
“How to Write Summary Reports for the ITERS-R” with Debby Cryer.

July 28 – 30 – Start time: Approximately 7:30 AM. Start time may need to be adjusted, depending upon travel time required.

Visits to various childcare providers will be made on these days to practice using the ITERS-R with Richard Clifford and Debby Cryer.

Please be prepared to stay until approximately 6:00 PM on each of these days.

The ending time for each day is listed as approximate. It is possible that we can be finished a little earlier or even a little later each day.

These will be long, intense days, but we will be gaining an expertise only available to our core group. This is a marvelous opportunity that we have to train with two of the ITERS-

APPENDIX C

R authors, Debby Cryer and Richard Clifford. They will be here to help us learn as much as possible during the time we have together.

Rater Reliability Visits for the ITERS-R

Please reserve the following dates to make the rater reliability visits for the ITERS-R:

August 10, 11, 12, 13, 2004

August 16, 17, 18, 19, 2004

August 23, 24, 25, 26, 2004

Start time each morning will be approximately 7:30 AM. Please plan to be available until approximately 5:00 PM each day. These visits will be made in the Columbia metro area.

The times and dates for rater reliability visits are subject to change.

Tablet PC Training

August 3, 4, 5, 2004
9:00 AM – 4:30 PM

This training will be at the USC/Gateway CDC on Wheat Street in Columbia.

Schedule for Practice Visits

July 28 – Team 1 will go to Lexington Medical Center CDC – visit in toddler class

Team 2 will go to Arthurtown CDC – visit in toddler class

July 29 – Both teams will be at USC/Gateway CDC

July 30 – Team 1 will go to Arthurtown CDC – visit in toddler class

Team 2 will go to Lexington Medical Center

August 5 – Practice using Tablet PC in a visit

August 10 – Both teams will be at Education Express – visit infant and toddler rooms

APPENDIX C

August 18 – Living Springs Lutheran Church CDC
Both teams visit two 2 year-old rooms

August 19 – Shandon Presbyterian Church CDC
Both teams visit infant and toddler rooms

August 24 – Team 1 will be at Lexington Medical Center CDC in infant room

August 25 – Team 2 will be at Lexington Medical Center CDC in infant room

APPENDIX D

ITERS-R Interrater Reliability Log

Name	(1st 3 days with authors) 1 st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9
Date >	7/28/04	7/29/04	7/30/04	8/10/04	8/12/04	8/17/04	8/18/04	8/19/04	8/2
1	75% G1	84% G1	97% G1	100% G1	100% G1	94% G1	82% G1	91% G1	
2	66% G1	84% G1	97% G1	88% G2	97% G2	97% G2	82% G2	88% G1	
3	78% G1	75% G1	74% G1	94% G2	88% G3	100% G1	73% G1	88% G2	
4	47% G1	75% G1	65% G1	88% G1	91% G1	97% G2	61% G1	94% G3	
5	81% G2	66% G2	75% G2	94% G3	97% G1	100% G2	94% G2	85% G2	
6	48% G2	63% G2	72% G2	72% G3	91% G3	88% G2	79% G2	91% G3	
7	77% G2	84% G2	91% G2	n/a ---	n/a ---	94% G1	100% G1	91% G1	
8	68% G2	78% G2	72% G2	84% G3	97% G2	97% G2	n/a ---	79% G2	

APPENDIX D

SACERS-R Interrater Reliability Log

Name	(1st 3 days with author)		3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	9 th
	1st	2nd							
Date >	10/19/04	10/19/04		10/25/04	10/27/04	10/27/04	11/2/04	11/3/04	11/4/04
1	76%	73%	87%	91%	91%	100%	93%	93%	
	G1	G1	G1	G1	G1	G1	G1	G1	G
2	72%	93%	80%	93%	88%	86%	91%	98%	
	G1	G1	G1	G2	G2	G2	G2	G1	G
3	86%	80%	87%	93%	88%	n/a	98%	98%	
	G1	G1	G1	G2	G3	G1	G1	G2	
4	86%	87%	93%	98%	88%	84%	95%	95%	
	G1	G1	G1	G1	G1	G2	G1	G3	

APPENDIX E

Code of Ethics for the SC Core Groups (Assessors for Environment Rating Scales)

To enable the SC Core Group for the Environment Rating Scales to conduct its business effectively and to maintain reliability within the Core Group, the highest standard of ethics and loyalty must be maintained.

As a SC Core Group Member for the Environment Rating Scales I agree to the following:

____ Function within limits set by the Anchor(s) for each SC Core Group.

____ Follow established written protocol for assessment and reliability visits/observations.

____ Conduct assessments and reliability visits/observations only at the direction/auspices of the SC Department of Social Services (SCDSS) and the SC Department of Education (SDE).

____ Understand that assessments and reliability visits/observations are part of my job responsibilities.

____ Not accept payment, gifts or gratuities from those being visited/observed and not accept any payment for services related to assessment, training and technical assistance of the Environment Rating Scales.

____ Not use inappropriate language or slang in communicating with those being visited/observed.

____ Maintain a professional demeanor during these visits/observations.

____ Not discuss any details of the visits/observations with persons other than the Core Group and conduct discussions with the Core Group in a private setting where others cannot overhear.

____ Not provide any training or technical assistance on the Environment Rating Scales unless authorized or directed by the Anchor(s) or SCDSS Child Care Program supervisory staff or SDE Office of Early Childhood Education supervisory staff.

____ Not leave assessment tools/materials unprotected where they can be accessed or observed by others.

____ I may not share this information outside of the SC Core Group unless directed by SCDSS Child Care Program supervisory staff or SDE Office of Early Childhood Education supervisory staff. All information about the center, teachers, directors, other staff, and children is considered confidential.

I agree to all of the requirements of the Code of Ethics above with my initials by each item and my signature below.

Name: _____
(Print name) (Sign Name)

Date: _____

Sworn before me on this _____ day of _____ of 2004

Notary Signature: _____

My Commission Expires on: _____

To enable the SC Core Group for Palmetto STARS Level 2 to conduct its business effectively and to maintain reliability within the Core Group, the highest standard of ethics and loyalty must be maintained.

Function within limits set by the Anchor(s) for each SC Core Group.

____ Conduct assessments and reliability visits/observations only at the direction/auspices of the SC Department of Social Services (SCDSS).

____ Not accept payment, gifts or gratuities from those being visited/observed and not accept any payment for services related to assessment, training and technical assistance for the Palmetto STARS Level 2.

Maintain a professional demeanor during these visits/observations.

____ Not discuss any details of the visits/observations with persons other than the Core Group and conduct discussions with the Core Group in a private setting where others cannot overhear.

____ Not provide any training or technical assistance on the Palmetto STARS Level 2 unless authorized or directed by the Anchor(s) or SCDSS Child Care Program supervisory staff.

 Not leave assessment tools/materials unprotected where they can be accessed or observed by others.

____ I may not share this information outside of the SC Core Group unless directed by SCDSS Child Care Program supervisory staff. All information about the center, teachers, directors, other staff, and children is considered confidential.

I agree to all of the requirements of the Code of Ethics above with my initials by each item and my signature below.

Name: _____
(Print name) (Sign Name)

Date: _____

Sworn before me on this _____ day of _____ of 2005

Notary Signature: _____

My Commission Expires on: _____

APPENDIX E

Code of Ethics for the SC Core Group (Assessors for Palmetto STARS Level 3)

To enable the SC Core Group for Palmetto STARS Level 3 to conduct its business effectively and to maintain reliability within the Core Group, the highest standard of ethics and loyalty must be maintained.

As a SC Core Group Member for the Palmetto STARS Level 3, I agree to the following:

____ Function within limits set by the Anchor(s) for each SC Core Group.

____ Follow established written protocol for assessment and reliability visits/observations.

____ Conduct assessments and reliability visits/observations only at the direction/auspices of the SC Department of Social Services (SCDSS).

____ Understand that assessments and reliability visits/observations are part of my job responsibilities.

____ Not accept payment, gifts or gratuities from those being visited/observed and not accept any payment for services related to assessment, training and technical assistance for the Palmetto STARS Level 3.

____ Not use inappropriate language or slang in communicating with those being visited/observed.

____ Maintain a professional demeanor during these visits/observations.

____ Not discuss any details of the visits/observations with persons other than the Core Group and conduct discussions with the Core Group in a private setting where others cannot overhear.

____ Not provide any training or technical assistance on the Palmetto STARS Level 3 unless authorized or directed by the Anchor(s) or SCDSS Child Care Program supervisory staff.

____ Not leave assessment tools/materials unprotected where they can be accessed or observed by others.

____ I may not share this information outside of the SC Core Group unless directed by SCDSS Child Care Program supervisory staff. All information about the center, teachers, directors, other staff, and children is considered confidential.

I agree to all of the requirements of the Code of Ethics above with my initials by each item and my signature below.

Name: _____
(Print name) (Sign Name)

Date: _____

Sworn before me on this _____ day of _____ of 2005

Notary Signature: _____

My Commission Expires on: _____

APPENDIX F

Agenda for Overview Day for 3-5 year old Palmetto STARS Level 2 Standards (9:30 AM -5:00 PM)

(9:30-9:45) Icebreaker with Elaine Justice

Use the Palmetto STARS Level 2 Job Description handout for the icebreaker activity
Elaine Justice will tell about ordering for lunch and get all lunch orders.

Supplies needed: Palmetto STARS Level 2 Job Description: 1 Copy per program monitor

(9:45-10:05) Elaine Justice will introduce Myrna Turner

Myrna selected because of her experience doing rater reliability with 3 levels. She will share what she has learned. What she has learned will be the basis for our training.
Myrna Turner shares what we need to know to begin.

Supplies needed: None

(10:05-10:15) Sherry Smith will introduce the showing of the Come, Play With Me video.

This clip is a snapshot of quality care. Because it is so short, it does not capture all of the items that we to be observed in the 3-5 year old Palmetto STARS Level 2 Child Care Program Standards.

Saundra Ground will be responsible for turning on the video and stopping it at the appropriate place.

Supplies needed: Come, Play with Me Video, Multimedia machine and VCR.

(10:15-12:30) Go through the Palmetto STARS Level 2 Standards one by one in the order in which they appear.

Sherry Smith and Elaine Justice will toss a (soft) ball or Koosh ball and the person who catches the ball will read the next standard.

We will need to cover at least 21 standards (total of 52)

Supplies needed: Palmetto STARS Level 2 Standards with Clarifications: 1 per program monitor and a soft ball/Koosh ball

(12:30-1:15) Working Lunch (Lunch will be delivered.)

(1:15-1:20) Elaine Justice will introduce our Theme Song: The More We Score Together

Supplies needed: Copies of the Theme Song: The More We Score Together: 1 per program monitor

(1:20-1:30) Elaine Justice and Sherry Smith will go over the Code of Ethics for Palmetto STARS Level 2 and get everyone to sign 2 originals.

Kari Lusso and Myrna Turner will notarize.

Supplies needed: Code of Ethics for Palmetto STARS Level 2: 1 per program monitor

(1:30-4:30) Go through the Palmetto STARS Level 2 Standards one by one in the order in which they appear.

APPENDIX F

Sherry Smith and Elaine Justice will toss a (soft) ball or Koosh ball and the person who catches the ball will read the next standard.

We will need to cover at least 31 standards (total of 52)

Supplies needed: Palmetto STARS Level 2 Standards with Clarifications: 1 per program monitor and a soft ball

Insert the Video Observation Activity

Insert the center card activity

(4:30-5:00) Pre and post card game (same game used each time) for Procedures for Reliability Visits

Sherry Smith and Elaine Justice will do the pre and post card game and go through the procedures between the 2 activities.

Supplies needed: Procedures for Reliability Visits: 1 per program monitor and a set of cards for each group.

Reminders about next day.

APPENDIX G
Evaluation/Comment Form Summary
Date: 1/18/05

Did you participate in any of the following? (Please circle all that apply to you).

ECERS-R January 2004 training	1
ITERS-R July 2004 training	5
SACERS October/November 2004 training	2
ECERS-R October/November 2004 training	3
none	3

Please describe how and why the following were helpful to you today. If not helpful, please state why and suggest alternatives for improvement.

No activities necessary

a. Job Description

Very helpful – ABC Program Monitoring staff
Good – lets us know what is expected of us
Yes – let us be prepared for the upcoming responsibilities and expectations.
Quick
Clarity of assessor expectations
Helpful ensuring that we all know our job descriptions
I feel that there are some extra things being added to our work load, and we are now made aware.
Helpful, but not essential
It was helpful
Yes, it was helpful. The job description helped me to focus on what the role of my job is.
Helpful
Good
Good tool – helped me to stay focused on my tasks and my responsibilities.

b. Reflections from Environment Rating Scales Experience

N/A – 1
Very tough – stressful, but informative & fun at the same time.

APPENDIX G

Yes

Make this quick.

Needed and helpful

Helpful in sharing experience about how stressful it can be trying to become reliable.

Fine

The rating scale allowed me to remain more focused during the reviews.

Helpful

Great help

First time out – much confusion about what the standard scales were attempting to rate. Became clearer after we spent more time talking about the scale.

c. Video “Come, Play With Me”

Excellent video

Yes – preparation

Not needed – waste of time – clarification is most important

Too busy

There was not enough shown in video to complete activity

I was able to see what to look for when going into different classrooms

Very good video

Waste of time, not helpful – have seen many times. (Maybe just watch 5 minutes of this in the future)

The clips were very useful

The video was good for the activity but it was hard to understand

Not so good

Helpful. Suggest use more of that

d. Review of Palmetto STARS Level 2 Standards

Very helpful

Very necessary

Very applicable and helpful

Too much disagreement – did not stay on task

Necessary, needed more time (days) to discuss/review and understand

Clarifications were made so that it could be understood

Great

Felt that we were rushed through this. Need to be able to get in discussion. Most important. Need more time to go over.

I now have a better understanding of the standards

I thought that we should have spent more time on the overview of the standards because all were not sure of the clarifications.

APPENDIX G

Great help

e. All About Level 2 (3-5)

Very helpful

Very helpful to go through each standard item by item even though it took longer than anticipated.

Too rushed. A trial error out in the field would have been beneficial using the tool, before handed out.

Very necessary!!

Good insight into STARS

Necessary

Great – this was definitely needed. I feel the follow-up we did after the 1st visit was essential to clear up last minute issues/questions.

Most important, need more time to go over, need to be able to get in discussion.

I now have a better understanding of the standards

I thought that we should have spent more time on the overview of the standards because all were not sure of the clarifications.

Great help

Increased my understanding about level 2

f. Code of Ethics

Well done

Yes – to know/realize expectations

Good – quick

Very applicable to role of assessors and importance of privacy/confidentiality.

Necessary

Helpful

Let us read it on our own – took too much time

The code of ethics will help me to better maintain reliability

Helpful

Good

Important information for using professional guidelines

g. Video Observation Activity

N/A – 1

Great practice

I thought the center activity where you count the number of items was more helpful than the observation of the video.

No – was not explained very well. Everyone was not sure what the expectation was.

APPENDIX G

Not needed – we already know this – no need to watch video twice!
Too much noise during video
Being very attentive will make a difference during the observation
It was hard to hear the teachers because of the narration
Waste of time – activity was not helpful
Good tool!
We could have omitted this activity – more time should have been spent on the standards.
Too confusing
Good activity – helpful

h. Procedures for Reliability Visits

Well done
Procedure was not very clear
No need to watch
Good
Need to revisit
Had to rush through
Good
I was unclear as to what to give credit for during the first visit
Helpful
OK – reliability sheets should have been discussed
Great activity!
Good
Helpful in staying focused on appropriate handling/protocols when on visits.

Do you feel prepared to begin observations for inter-rater reliability?

Yes - 6
Unsure – may need more clarification on a few items still....
No – after 1st day of visits called meeting – 2nd & 3rd day more clear.
No – we didn't clarify enough
Confused with discussions
Yes & No
Not at first, but after the first few visits, I did
No

If not, please describe what further assistance would be helpful to you.

Taken more time explaining the clarifications for the standards
Stay on target – stick to task
Need more clarification on standards.

APPENDIX G

Another meeting to make sure we are on the same page because my group on Friday was still asking questions.

How could this process be improved for someone unfamiliar with the Level 2 Standards?

More practice with videos and/or practice observations.

Perhaps a 2 day overview or a 1 day overview without feedback from group/changing clarification notes.

2 days of going over standards instead of rushing through one day. We actually might have helped with some of the confusion by clarifying the clarifications better.

How to observe and what the standards mean is the MOST important – How can we be reliable without this?

Review standards

Review protocol for visits

User friendly score sheets

More days explaining standards and making sure they are understood.

I felt very “rushed” the whole week. Need to take more time and talk about different situations encountered.

Spend about 2 days straight only on the standards

Need to be time on the standards and not doing activities – save activities to the end of the day.

Have a tool ready before we go out and try to get reliable. If the monitors have questions about the tool we have been using, then how can we get reliable?

Put more time in preparing Level 2 standards, score sheet, etc. before actually training new raters.

APPENDIX G
Evaluation/Comment Form Summary
Date: 1/24/05

Did you participate in any of the following? (Please circle all that apply to you).

ECERS-R January 2004 training	0
ITERS-R July 2004 training	3
SACERS October/November 2004 training	2
ECERS-R October/November 2004 training	2
none	2

Please describe how and why the following were helpful to you today. If not helpful, please state why and suggest alternatives for improvement.

a. Job Description

N/A - 4
Reviewed 1/18/05
Understood
Helpful
O.K.

b. Reflections from Environment Rating Scales Experience

N/A -4
Review process for 0-2 helpful
Fine.

c. Review of Palmetto STARS Level 2 Standards

0-2 Level 2 standards review went well. Standards organized and more "thought-out".
Insightful
Great
Better understanding.
Helpful.
Much smoother
Very helpful
O.K. better

d. All About Level 2 (0-2)

N/A -2
It's hard to say at this point if Level 2 standards are too high for Level 2 providers to meet.
Good/thorough overview.

APPENDIX G

Great.
Much smoother
O.K. better

e. **Code of Ethics**

N/A - 4
Previously signed 1/18/05
O.K.

f. **Video Observation Activity**

N/A - 6
Not shown

g. **Procedures for Reliability Visits**

N/A -2
Procedures much clearer.
Good.
Thorough.

Do you feel prepared to begin observations for inter-rater reliability?

Yes - 5

If not, please describe what further assistance would be helpful to you.

How could this process be improved for someone unfamiliar with the Level 2 Standards?

2 days on standards.
Suggest observation time be anywhere from 30-45 minutes.
Ensure that each person has time to review Standards before and after changes.
Set aside a few minutes for the person to familiarize themselves with tool prior to observation visit.

- Suggestion
1. Have provider submit schedule beforehand so we can determine what rooms to go to when. This will help with us reading our scale.
 2. Room time – anywhere from 30-45 minutes each but no more than.

We should be able to decide, on our own, what rooms and when.

APPENDIX H
3-5 Rater-Reliability

Name	January 19, 2005		January 20, 2005	January 21, 2005	
	Class A	Class B		Class A	Class B
1	87%	81%	85%	88%	99%
2	91%	96%	92%	87%	98%
3			92%	92%	93%
4	83%	87%	(missed)	92%	88%
5	81%	86%	81%	93%	95%
6	84%	87%	85%	94%	96%
7	90%	96%	83%	94%	98%
8	94%	98%	95%	90%	92%
9			96%	92%	81%
10	83%	80%	89%	96%	92%
11			95%	94%	98%
12	83%	79%	91%	88%	73%
13	75%	89%	96%	88%	82%
14			96%	92%	96%
15	86%	83%	85%	90%	93%

APPENDIX H
0-2 Rater-Reliability

	January 26, 2005		January 27, 2005		January 28, 2005	
Name	Class A	Class B	Class A	Class B	Class A	Class B
1	98%	95%	94%	99%	98%	96%
2	95%	92%	96%	95%	no visit	no visit
3	90%	96%	96%	96%		
4	94%	95%	87%	92%	no visit	no visit
5	92%	93%	82%	85%	99%	99%
6	90%	92%	86%	93%	98%	98%
7	90%	94%	99%	95%	98%	98%
8	98%	94%	96%	93%	no visit	no visit
9	88%	92%	99%	98%		
10	96%	92%	94%	94%		
11	89%	93%	76%	99%	96%	98%
12	87%	98%	96%	95%		
13	92%	93%	86%	99%		
14	98%	89%	98%	98%	98%	100%
15	94%	93%	89%	99%	no visit	no visit

APPENDIX H
6-12 Rater-Reliability

	January 25, 2005	January 26, 2005		January 27, 2005	
Name		Class A	Class B	Class A	Class B
1	90%	87%	86%	90%	98%
2	89%	96%	96%	94%	95%
3	92%	100%	100%	95%	94%
4	86%	80%	88%	90%	90%
5	90%	96%	95%	90%	92%
6	89%	96%	93%	87%	90%
7	91%	98%	98%		
8	92%	97%	94%	91%	90%
9	90%	91%	92%		
10	91%	96%	99%		
11	91%	98%	94%	96%	96%
12	82%	95%	98%	95%	93%
13	85%	92%	96%	92%	96%
14	94%	92%	95%	94%	94%
15	92%	88%	97%	90%	96%